

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 654
By Finney

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Jon Anthony "Tony"
Koella, Sr., of Rockford.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Jon Anthony "Tony" Koella, Sr.; and

WHEREAS, Tony Koella was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, he was born on June 10, 1938, and graduated from Maryville High School; he had a deep respect for all that can be learned from books and in school, and went on to earn an engineering degree from North Carolina State, and an MBA degree from Harvard University in Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, Tony Koella served with acumen and alacrity in his professional life as a Financial Analyst, Internal Auditor, and Controller for area corporations, but perhaps the job that meant the most to him was one for which he was least academically trained; and

WHEREAS, Tony Koella served as the Assistant Commissioner in the Tennessee Department of Conservation from 1973 to 1975, under Governor Winfield Dunn, who also named him a Tennessee Colonel; as a perpetual student who believed that the outdoors was both his greatest teacher and the best classroom imaginable, he never tired of being under the open sky, and his greatest love was birding; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Koella could walk outside blindfolded and identify all the species of birds nearby and count how many of each species was present; his binoculars were usually around his neck or close at hand, as he was always on the alert for birdsong or sightings; legend has it that he totaled three cars while working for the Conservation Department, because he was watching and listening for birds while driving, and his daughter remembers her state of panic as

he drove down the middle of Old Knoxville Highway with his head sticking out of the window, looking everywhere but at the road; and

WHEREAS, this contradictory combination of focus and inattention garnered Tony Koella the Distinguished Service Award from the Tennessee Ornithological Society for his outstanding contributions towards the preservation of natural wildlife habitats and his conservation efforts; birding was a pursuit he enjoyed as a boy when his mother gave him a bird book to keep him busy, and by the time he was an Eagle Scout, he taught nature and birding to other scouts at Camp Pellissippi; as an adult, he put Rankin Bottoms on the birding map as an important habitat for wading and shore birds and kept one of the most complete lists of sighted species in the region; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Koella was a renaissance man, whose heart and intellect were big enough to embrace a wide spectrum of interests, activities, and loves; he was a man on a quiet yet passionate quest to discover truth, with a thirst for knowledge and experience; and

WHEREAS, a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and a valuable asset to his community, Tony Koella served as a member of the Alcoa Kiwanis Club and the Tennessee Ornithological Society; he was also inducted into the Kiwanis Legion of Honor for distinguished service; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Koella was an active and devout member of New Providence Presbyterian Church, which he served faithfully for many years; he was a man of God, an awesome but quiet witness to the world, who read from Genesis to Revelation in the Bible time and time again; and

WHEREAS, Tony Koella was deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; by his passing, he has been reunited with his father, Carl O. Koella, Sr.; brother, former Tennessee Senator Carl O. Koella, Jr.; and daughter, Kristen Evans Koella; and

WHEREAS, he was most grateful for the companionship of his loving and devoted wife, Mary Laura, and he is also survived by his sons, Jon Koella, Jr., and wife, Sherry, Louis "Bummi" Koella and wife, Elizabeth, and William Koella; daughters, Julia Mayshark and husband, Jesse, and Jennifer Koella; granddaughter, Margaret Koella; grandsons, Carver and

Alexander Koella, and Zoller Mayshark; mother, Betty Koella; brother, Stephen T. Koella; and several nieces and nephews; and

WHEREAS, Tony Koella leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Jon Anthony “Tony” Koella, Sr., reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family and many friends of Tony Koella.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.